DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 085 530 95 CE 000 708

TITLE	Delaware's Occupational-Vocational Education Model: Establishment and Implementation of a K-12 Career Guidance and Job Placement Program.
INSTITUTION	Delaware State Board for Vocational Education, Milford.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO	0-361-0013
PUB DATE	Jul 73
GRANT	OEG-0-71-0678(361)
NOTE	24p.; For related document, see CE 000 710
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Education; Educational Programs; *Job Placement; *Occupational Guidance; *Program Development; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Career Guidance and job placement are integral elements of the career education concept. Career decision making, a major component, includes learning about self, the world of work, and the interrelationship of these factors. The total professional staff, including a placement coordinator, should be involved in a team approach to serve all students. Personality characteristics and training requirements of the coordinator are described. The coordinator's responsibilities focus on curriculum development and require input from employers, community agencies, parents, and students. Rational procedures for implementing followup activity must be an integral part of the total system. (MS)

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DELAWARE'S
OCCUPATIONAL-VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION MODEL

ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A K-12 CAREER GUIDANCE AND JOB PLACEMENT PROGRAM

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ED 085530

ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A K-12 CAREER GUIDANCE AND JOB PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Developed by

DELAWARE'S OCCUPATIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION MODEL

An Exemplary Project in Vocational Education
Conducted Under
Part D of Public Law 90-576

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July 1973

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Introduction

Career guidance and job placement are integral and essential elements of the total career education concept. Research literature in career education has indicated that career guidance and placement could be considered independently. However, each possess similar characteristics and a total separation is impossible.

A major responsibility of career guidance is to provide all students with experience in developing decision-making ability. Informed decisions are necessary to function independently in our democratic society. Career decision-making includes learning about "self," the "world of work," and the interrelationship of these factors. Choosing a tentative career is not necessarily the most important aspect of guidance. However, the process of making a career decision is of significant importance to the individual.

All teachers, administrators and counselors must share in the responsibility of placing <u>all</u> students on the next rung of a career ladder. Placement services are for all students, not the select few who counselors have traditionally placed in college. Therefore, in the truest sense, placement is the "acid test" for all education and educational management must be held accountable not only for their product but to their product.

If more than token success in implementing career guidance and job placement programs is to be expected, the total professional staff must be committed to career education. Career education is everyones' responsibility and is a life-long process. A prominent educator has coined the phrase "from womb to the tomb" to define the true nature of career education.

What Is Career Guidance?

It is clear that the role of guidance counselors must change to meet the responsibility of delivering career education to all who want and need it.

One of the best definitions of career guidance is outlined by Helling and Ruff (1973). They described career guidance in terms of "what it is and what it is not."

1. Career guidance must be available for all students, since, basically, all students are in pursuit of a life career. It is not solely for those not choosing to pursue a four-year college degree.

2. Career guidance is continuous, sequential and developmental in nature. It is not a one-time effort provided near the end of a formalized education program. It continues throughout one's active work life providing assistance as one's career role changes.

3. Career guidance provides for exploration toward an awareness of oneself and a relationship of self to the world around him. It is not confined to the development of an awareness of occupations.

4. Career guidance involves the total school staff and the full resources of the community. It is not limited to the counselor's office, the four walls of the classroom, or the confines of a school building.

5. Career guidance permeates the entire school curriculum. It is not something which can be separated out as purely and simply a guidance function.

6. Career guidance involves the effective utilization of occupational information; it is not simply the dispensing of this information. This dictates that decision-making skills must become an integral part of career guidance.

7. Career guidance broadens an individual's opportunity for career choices. In career guidance the emphasis is not on what career an individual chooses; more important is the idea that he has the opportunity for choosing a career rather than falling into a job.

8. Career guidance is one aspect of the total guidance process, and it cannot be set aside as something different and apart from the other aspects of guidance. Therefore, it is not realistic to think that career guidance functions can be separated from the other guidance functions or that a person identified as a career counselor can adequately handle all career guidance in any one setting.

9. Career guidance is generally conceived of as the planned activities and processes with which an individual becomes involved as a part of his career development, which is in turn a crucial aspect of his total human development.

Career guidance is based on the premise that all students are in pursuit of a "career life." Career development is the thread of continuity around which all other elements of the guidance program should revolve.

Job Placement

All educators must accept the responsibility for student placement. If placement is viewed as an element of educational accountability, it is apparent that it is a service needed by all students.

What is expected of the placement coordinator? Since there is wide diversity among school districts, the role of the placement coordinator varies.

Lillian Buckingham and Arthur Lee (1973) listed the following specific responsibilities of the placement coofdinator:

1. Conferences for and with administrators, teachers, parents, supportive services, vocational rehabilitation counselors and employers;
2. Coordination of activities in areas of distributive education, trades, business, industry, health services and general work experience.

Team Approach

Administrative Cooperation

Attempting to implement the placement program without total administrative support from Boards of Education, superintendents, administrators and principals is extremely difficult. Obviously, the administrative team must be committed to career education. The administration determines educational philosophy; directs curriculum; dictates methods of scheduling; controls teacher assignments and the expenditures of funds. Placement programs cannot be established in school districts without administrative support. Therefore, the placement coordinator has the responsibility to keep administrators informed of all activities and make suggestions for program improvement.

Teacher's Role

Teachers are the key to successful placement programs. Daily contact between teachers and students provide teachers with an opportunity to assist students in obtaining career information.

The placement coordinator should assist teachers in providing students with career-related class assignments, field trips, resource speakers and other career-related activities.

Parent Involvement

Parents have a tremendous influence on their children's career aspirations. Parental involvement is important in any career-related decision. Problems will develop if parental aspirations differ from those of the child.

Parental approval is required for all work-related activities associated with the school; therefore, their support or rejection of a tentative career decision has an effect on the probability of the child achieving success or failure in his career venture.

Students

As students progress through a K-12 career education program, they develop an understanding of themselves and careers consistent with their aspirations. Students need accurate information and reaslistic work experiences in order to make tentative career decisions.

Students are excellent sources of career information regarding work experiences and tentative career selections are often based on peer-group information.

The placement coordinator's responsibility to the student is to provide career information and experiences essential for selecting, securing and maintaining a rewarding and satisfying career.

Community

A community is identified as a specific geographic area and includes a myriad of occupational clusters used by residents for gainful employment.

The community plays a key role in career education. Local business and industry provide the primary setting for career development opportunities. However, many young adults are completely ignorant of the various career possibilities found in their local community.

Employers and educators must communicate for career education to function effectively. The community must understand educational programs in terms of social priorities and concerns.

If the placement coordinator is to be effective, he must have a thorough understanding of the local industrial and business community. His reservoir of local occupational opportunities must include: company's product or service, job specifications, hiring

practices, federal and state labor laws, union regulations and personal characteristics.

The Coordinator

Responsibilities of the placement coordinator must be clearly delineated.

Personal Characteristics

The placement coordinator's position requires a person with certain personality characteristics. The ability to communicate with people is of paramount importance. A typical work day for the placement coordinator might consist of: (a) morning coffee on the construction site with a contractor, (b) providing a senior with direction to obtain career information, (c) providing career information to a group of elementary teachers to assist them in planning career units, (d) having lunch with the president of a chain of department stores, (e) giving a presentation concerning local part-time job opportunities to an eighth grade class, and (f) speaking at a dinner sponsored by a local social organization.

The placement coordinator must be flexible and capable of working with a variety of personalities. His personal characteristics should be analogous to qualities of good salesmanship.

Professional Competencies

The logical person for this position is a trained guidance counselor who has had a variety of work experiences outside of

education. He must have an understanding of the total educational system and be cognizant of procedures for implementing "change;" trained in educational psychology; familiar with the principles of education; aware of the elements of human growth and development; and have a thorough understanding of learning principles.

As a professional counselor, he must commit himself to assisting all children with the career decision-making process and utilize proper guidance procedures and techniques to insure that all students are adequately prepared for the "next step" in the career development process.

Office Arrangements

Arrangements should be made so the coordinator's office is in close proximity to the counseling suite. The placement coordinator must have close coordination with the total staff, especially the counselors. The structure of the total guidance program should facilitate cooperation that is essential in career guidance. Since the coordinator's responsibilities are diverse, the services of an exceptionally versatile and capable secretary are required.

Implementing Procedures

Although there is no prescribed method used to implement a job placement and career guidance program, the following procedural design is suggested and was used by DOVEM's staff.

Know The Local Community

1. Read all the community information on file in the district office.

2. Contact the Chamber of Commerce and Retail Merchants, they are usually willing to provide a membership list and assist you in understanding the community.

3. Obtain permission to explain your program to professional and social organizations. This effort will have rewards, ten-fold when you start the placement activities.

4. Long-time resident teachers are willing to provide assistance in identifying contact persons within specific industries or businesses.

5. Unions must be contacted and convinced of the value of career education or students are bound to have problems finding employment especially those in skilled trades.

6. The State and Federal Department of Labor officials can provide excellent services above their usual duties.

7. Contact all agencies involved with vocational or social services.

8. Become knowledgeable of the employment agencies and how they operate.

9. Work closely with all instructors and arrange to meet with those teachers in charge of various organizations. It is this personal contact that is essential for further cooperation.

Industrial And Business Survey

A survey should be conducted to obtain the following information in an attempt to better understand the industrial and business community:

1. The company address
2. Distance from school
3. Hiring age and practices
4. Work environment
5. Union or non-union
6. Salary scale
7. Benefits package
8. Advancement policy
9. Number of employees
10. Job requirements
11. Contact person
12. Variety of employment opportunities
13. Products

The instrument should also contain questions regarding information potentially useful in curriculum development. Determine if the company would: (1) allow visitations or field trips; (2) cooperate in realistic work experience in the form of cooperative work, work study, part-time or summer employment; (3) provide resource speakers. Identify those occupations requiring special skills. Determine if any companies would cooperate by permitting highly trained employees to give presentations to students interested in a specific occupation. Determine if the company is willing to donate materials and supplies or loan machines to the school. Each company should be rated on a scale of cooperation.

The following four suggestions will make the survey progress smoothly:

1. Plan interviews in a geographic area.
2. Prearrange all interviews by either a personal letter or by telephone.
3. Allow ample time for the interview.

4. If the management does not object, take photographs of the plant and secure all available literature explaining the company and products.

Occupational Information

Additional information is needed other than the local occupational information obtained from the survey. How do we expect students to strive towards careers that do not know exist?

There are very sophisticated occupational information retrieval systems; the computer system tops the list, but cost is a prohibitive factor for many school districts.

Publishing companies are now producing excellent career materials; therefore, a career resource center should be established to maintain a variety of career education materials for use by faculty and students.

Large corporations are excellent sources of career information. A simple request letter will usually be adequate to secure booklets, brochures and pamphlets. Request at least three copies and route the information to teachers planning career units.

The best career information materials are useless if students and teachers do not use them. It is important that teachers plan class activities requiring students to utilize career materials. Provide teachers with a list of all materials available and indicate specific sources for different subjects.

There is a long standing argument about the best location

for occupational information files. Should they be located in the guidance suite or the library? The physical location is determined by variables unique to each situation. It is not important where files are located just as long as they are used by the students.

Career Guidance And Placement Service

The placement coordinator should make his presence known to students. The following methods may be used:

1). Assembly program outlining the placement coordinator's role

2). Presentations given in individual classrooms

3). Announcements over the intercom

4). Publication of news articles

5). Television and radio programs

Successful programs depend on the services performed for students. The placement coordinator's role is drastically short-changed if students see him only as a source of jobs. If the career guidance aspect is emphasized, students will view the placement specialist as another "guidance counselor." All students need the services of the placement coordinator, but in varying degrees. Special care should be exercised to insure that students, faculty and parents develop the idea that there is service for everyone.

Career Development Program

It is important to challenge students by asking them to outline their career decision-making process. Many have never

considered all the elements needed for accurate career decision-making.

Forms are needed outlining specific elements of the process. Explain the procedures and have each student conduct their own self-assessment.

Self Inventory

There are numerous forms that can be developed; however, the following have been found to be effective:

A. Personal History

1. Demographic data
2. Family
   A. Father's occupation, age
   B. Mother's occupation, age
   C. Brother's occupation, age
   D. Sister's occupation, age
3. Brief outline of family history
4. Medical history
   A. Contagious diseases contacted
   B. Physical defects
   C. Operations or broken bones
5. Outline physical characteristics, both strengths and weaknesses

B. Educational Experience

1. Name of school
2. Location of school
3. Scholastic average
4. Course liked best--grade--why?
5. Courses liked least--grade--why?
6. Extra-curricula activities liked best--why?
7. Extra-curricula activities liked least--why?
8. Part-time jobs, hours, salary--did you like the job? Why?
9. Principal source of money

10. What special activities did you participate in? (clubs or social groups)
    A. Which one did you like best? Why?
    B. Which one did you like least? Why?
11. Briefly outline your educational strengths and weaknesses.

C. Non-Educational Activities, Civic or Community Activities
    1. Organizations
    2. Address
    3. Major objectives
    4. Offices held, duration
    5. Reasons for joining
    6. Best liked activity
    7. Least liked activity
    8. Active or inactive member

D. Hobbies
    1. Hours spent per week
    2. Reason for selecting hobby

Self-analysis is extremely important and is essential to career development. Identification of this information is the first step toward finding a satisfying and rewarding career.

Standardized Test

Standardized test scores should be explained to each student. If the student has not taken at least three General Aptitude Tests, make arrangements for him to do so. It is important that the student fully understand test interpretations necessary for accurate self-analysis. If it is necessary, request a battery of selected tests to provide specific information concerning strengths or weaknesses. It is suggested that the following instruments be considered:

1. VOCATIONAL PREFERENCE INVENTORY, John H. Holland, Consulting Psychologist Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94306.

2. TEST OF BASIC EXPERIENCES, Margaret H. Moss, CTB/McGraw-Hill, Del Monte Research Park, Monterey Park, California 93940.

3. CAREER MATURITY INVENTORY, John O. Crites, CTB/ McGraw-Hill, Del Monte Research Park, Monterey, California 93940.

4. EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PLANNING SURVEY, J. D. Wiggins, State Department of Public Instruction, Dover, Delaware 19901, 1970.

5. THE SELF-DIRECTED SEARCH, John L. Holland, Consulting Psychologist Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94306.

Goal Setting

Students need to establish goals as part of their career development process.

Unfortunately, less than ten percent of the student population can determine long and short-range goals in relation to individual ability and interest.

Intermediate goals are not necessarily life-long commitments. Change is the only constant we have today and an understanding of the career decision-making processes is of greater importance than initial selection of an ultimate career objective.

Specific variables affecting the "world-of-work" are numerous with many complex interrelationships interacting to generate a myriad of societal complexities. In our dynamic technological society, specializing in one field becomes extremely complicated. However, if there is a thread of commonality in successful men, it is the thorough mastery of their chosen field. Success hinges upon the acquisition of superior knowledge and skill. Students need to fully understand this element of success when establishing goals. Success is relative and varies according to individual interpretation.

The establishment of goals is a major element in successful program development; therefore,

1) Carefully and thoroughly think about the specific goals you want to attain. Consider the attainment of these goals paramount;

2) Establishment of goals is useless unless there is a plan for achievement. Determine deadlines for attaining secondary goals before moving toward primary goals;

3) Success perpetuates success as secondary goals are attained. It is a positive reinforcement and spurs people on with increased vigor and enthusiasm;

4) Success strengthens confidence in one's abilities. Never linger on problems, analyze them and take appropriate action;

5) Follow plans through, regardless of outside critism; and

6) Evaluate the process and consider those segments previously omitted for later inclusion into the career program.

Form Development

It is suggested that the following information be obtained to assist students with the goal setting process:

1. Primary goal (job)
2. Date to achieve
3. Responsibilities
4. Educational requirements
5. Salary
6. Experiences needed (secondary goals)
7. Essential skills
8. Work environment
9. Geographic location
10. Advancement procedures
11. Monies needed
12. List personal characteristics necessary for success
13. Vacation procedures
14. Job security
15. Retirement plans

Naturally, it is the responsibility of teachers, parents and career guidance and job placement coordinators to assist students in obtaining information necessary to complete these forms.

Activities In Career Guidance

Activities vary to meet individual needs as determined by the student and correlated with his career education program. These activities should include "hands-on" experiences above and beyond the typical school program. Job fairs, field trips, resource speakers, work experience, co-op programs and simulated games are only a few of the activities that must be available to students. These activities should be structured to provide concrete experiences necessary to make career decisions. Helling and Ruff (1973) list

101 activities illustrating these types of activities.

Either in group or individual counseling sessions, special emphasis needs to be placed on: personal appearance, interview techniques, telephone voice, employer's test, professional and personal character references, procedures for finding employment, resume development, job application tips and gaining confidence in one's abilities. Many time, extremely insecure students need special attention when being placed on their first job.

Follow-up

Follow-up is a necessary ingredient for effective career guidance and placement. When developing the follow-up instrument, involve all elements of the professional staff affected by the data. There needs to be a clear and concise purpose for conducting the follow-up. After the survey questionnaire has been developed, request all teachers to critique the questionnaire. Be sure that items are structured to facilitate computer use.

Select the graduating class to be surveyed. The selection should be a class that has had ample time to gain useful experience. Do not plan on surveying the total class. Concentrate on a twenty (20) percent random sample and strive for one hundred (100) percent return.

Follow-up is a continuous process. Every year a class should be surveyed. Seniors need to be conditioned to the value of a follow-up. Their suggestions should be considered when developing the questionnaire.

Summary

A career guidance and job placement program has been described as it relates to the overall career education concept. The activities and procedures presented represent several alternate approaches and are not intended to provide a complete or universal guidance and placement program.

Considerable emphasis was given to the coordinator's personal characteristics and skills necessary to perform effectively. However, no one person can be expected to implement the total program. Responsibility for all students is placed on the total professional staff in a K-12 system. The coordinator's responsibilities focus on curriculum development and requires input from employers, community agencies, parents and students. These elements of society have not received serious consideration in the past.

Rational procedures and processes for implementing follow-up as an integral part of career education has been described in detail. Follow-up activities must permeate the total system and become an integral part of each student's educational program.

If career guidance and job placement programs are successfully implemented, they will provide the necessary force essential

to break the inertia that stifles educational change. Galileo provided an appropriate concluding statement: "YOU CANNOT TEACH A MAN ANYTHING. YOU CAN ONLY HELP HIM FIND IT WITHIN HIMSELF."

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Success Research Consultants, Inc. Guidance to Career Counseling, Success Research Consultants, Inc., 2440 West Lincoln Highway, Olympia Fields, Illinois, 1971, CF-286-1.